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New Discovered Fact.  
of a

Relative Nature  
in the

Venereal Poxson

1790.



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# *NEW DISCOVERED FACT*

OF A

## *RELATIVE NATURE*

IN THE

## *VENEREAL POISON.*

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BY JESSE FOOT, SURGEON.

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*LONDON:*

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1790.

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( ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL. )



TO THE  
MASTER, WARDENS, COURT OF ASSISTANTS,  
AND THE REST OF THE  
CORPORATION OF SURGEONS  
*IN LONDON,*

THIS PAPER IS MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED

BY  
THE AUTHOR.

NAM ET SINE AMORE, ET SINE CUPIDITATE, ET RURSUS SINE  
ODIO, ET SINE INVIDIA JUDICABUNT.

TULL. CICERONIS ORAT. PRO M. MARC.

Dean-street, Soho, }  
Feb. 10, 1790. }



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## P R E F A C E.

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I HAVE just stated the naked Fact in the following paper, without going any farther into the question than what was barely necessary to explain my intended distinction.

Those who pursue the study of pathology will find, through this Fact, an ample field hitherto unexplored, from which they may collect new and satisfactory information.

In consequence of this, and other new distinctions, I have founded a compleat Course of Lectures on the General Subject of the Venereal Disease. As it is a Course resulting from experience and increased information,

formation, of which I trust this Paper may be deemed a specimen, I have not hitherto consented to read it, until that I have a class of auditors large enough to recompense me for my labour, and free enough to give me credit for that which I conceive my indefatigable labour entitles me to expect. When that opportunity is given to me, I shall embrace it with pleasure, as it must be ever pleasing to me to impart that which may increase the public stock of knowledge, and promote the Profession of which I have the honour to be a Member.

If I have made a distinction which, from the year 1494 up to the present date, at least one thousand authors have overlooked, if that distinction be a necessary fact, without which, that which ought to be explained, could not be explained, I hope I shall have the active support of those who are convinced of this new Fact, remember-  
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ing always, that an intellectual man is never more pre-eminent to an ignorant one, than when he will not suppress the conviction of his understanding, in obedience to the sordid motive of interest.

My utmost wishes do not go so far as to suppose that this Fact will be adopted without a struggle. The mind of man, like the soil of the earth, must undergo preparation—prejudices, like weeds, must be first extirpated---the new produce must have room to expand, and time to flourish.

“ *Vetus opinio est, jam inde ab heroicis  
dicta temporibus, nihil hodie dici, quod  
non dictum sit prius. Hujus scilicet Auc-  
tores minimè præsagiebant, venturum  
tempus, quo ista, quæ tunc latebant, cla-  
rescerent; venturos dies, quibus nos tam  
aperta nescisse majores miraremur, &c.*”

PRÆFAT. STEPH. BLANCARDI.



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*NEW DISCOVERED FACT,*  
&c.

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**F**IRST, I shall take into consideration, not for the purpose of information, but of recollection, that venereal fluid received from another subject, will produce a local venereal effect upon other parts besides those for generation; because I believe that that important truth is too obvious, too commonly known, to be considered as a new truth, and too well recorded in conjunction with a train of continued, most severe, and most exacerbated symptoms that can be found throughout the histories of cases which have

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been

been given of the progress of the venereal disease.

But my present purpose of this observation is to prepare the mind, and to engage the attention to one of the most important theoretick points in the nature of that disease, that, in my opinion, has been for many years offered for discussion, and which is—that the venereal fluid produced through infection imparted by another subject, will be harmless to the subject who secretes it. That venereal fluid thus produced, neither generally, nor particularly, will ever act to the prejudice of the subject whose secretion it is, when it appears, and when it is known, that the venereal fluid of one subject being imparted to another subject, and there remaining so that such fluid may take effect, is the only means by which the venereal disease is propagated, and constantly supported in society.

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To enquire into, and to consider in truth, what will be the consequence of the venereal fluid, which is received from one subject, and imparted to another, what will be the effect of this upon any part where that it is left locally to act, and where that it does act, and then to compare it with what will be the consequence of the venereal fluid which is taken from one part of a subject, and conveyed to any other part of the same subject, and there to leave it, and by every means to induce it to act similar to that fluid which is received from another subject, and to see what will be the effect of this upon that part where it is left thus to produce an action—this is the purpose of my present paper, in order to place this new theory of mine in the strongest point of view that I can, and to try the stability and the truth of it by every possible test that I can.

I shall, therefore, for the further eluci-

dation of what I am hereafter to offer, make a few observations upon the liability of every part receiving a local infection of the venereal disease by other means than venereal intercourse betwixt the sexes, when by any extraordinary manner the venereal fluid of one subject is conveyed, and left so to act upon another.

In a rare case which I saw of a gonorrhœa of the eye, and where the eye was lost, it evidently appeared that it arose from the following accident, and that it was produced through the application of the venereal fluid of another subject to that part ; for the subject who lost his eye through it had knowledge of a woman half an hour before he went home, and when he came home, washing his eyes, because they were weak, as he had been in the habit of doing, with his own urine, he by that means imparted to his eye some of that venereal fluid which was imparted

parted to him just before by the infected woman. The eye began to inflame before that the venereal stimulus was discovered in the urethra, and each gonorrhœa after kept its own course ; and although both of his eyes were washed, as both were weak, yet only one of them became thus infected, because that none of the fluid of the woman, by being all consumed on the eye infected, or by some other failure in the action of the venereal fluid, took effect on the other eye.

Venereal fluid, imparted from another subject, has the power of producing a chancre upon the skin ; and when it is so lodged, and remains uninterrupted, it does so produce it. In general, after examining women, or delivering of women, who have a chancre, or a gonorrhœa, the hands are washed, it does not follow, that that which is possible to happen will happen, because the hands are continued to be washed, and

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the adhering virus is by this manner removed. But when there has been a cut or a sore upon the finger, in that case, notwithstanding the washing of the hands, and notwithstanding the insignificance of the cut or sore, for if it had been important, it would have been from that cause bound up, the subtlety of the fluid has taken in many instances effect, a chancre has been produced in consequence, and this chancre has been seldom known to be cured, without the constitution being most rapidly infected, and without a stronger and a longer application of mercury, than where the infection hath been contracted in the usual manner, and on the usual parts. I know of four practitioners in midwifry, who have experienced this condition, and the case of one of them became so desperate, as to baffle all art for near seven years; when during that time all the medical attention of all the medical men

of

of this and other countries were employed to it.

A tooth in transplantation, which is selected for its beauty, and for its soundness, and which to the individual who first possessed it, was to all intents harmless in its original situation, and which, although the subject who originally possessed it, was venereally infected, would have never, as a venereal tooth, been productive of ill effects to the subject who was the original possessor ; by this same tooth being transplanted into the socket of another subject, the local venereal infection will be immediately spread, a general ulceration of the surrounding parts will follow, and the venereal disease will sooner be constitutionally imparted in this instance also, than in the common and ordinary mode of its being communicated.

I mean to infer from what I have advanced,

vanced, that the local application of the infected fluid of one subject, so remaining upon another as that it may have the opportunity of taking effect, that it will always take effect on any part, that it will be from the law of poisons a necessary consequence. And I mean to prove from what I shall say hereafter, that the local fluid of a gonorrhœa or chancre of a subject thus only locally infected either with the one or with the other, will not, or cannot venereally infect any other part to which it can be applied of the same subject. In other words, I mean to prove, that the venereal fluid, so far as it refers to the same subject, and so far as it may be suspected to be capable of acting upon, and of producing either chancre or gonorrhœa, or both, when conveyed to another part of the same subject in such a manner that it would, if it could produce them, will not ever produce them. And farther, I mean to prove---but that I believe, will

will upon reflection be found to be unnecessary, for every day's observation does prove it----that gonorrhœal fluid on the same subject, secreted by the same subject, never produces a chancre on the same subject, and that chancrous fluid on the same subject, secreted by the same subject, never produces a gonorrhœa.----I mean to prove more, or at least, I mean to declare positively, that if in consequence of the original fluid which was received from another subject and which took effect, only that part where this *ab origine* fluid acted ever was impressed or acted upon through this single connection by this venereal fluid, and that if there were not the least grounds or possibility of any other infection being contracted, so that every other power was precluded, but that if a chancre on this part was ever followed by another chancre, or by a gonorrhœa, that such fresh local symptom must be produced.

out of the original chancre which was the seat of the action of the fluid of the other subject, if it was at all; I mean to be understood in this instance to say, that it is impossible to come to pass, and that it never did come to pass.

Those who from constant observation have declared, that the original cause which produced gonorrhœa and chancre was not the same, were led to this declaration from observing, that if they had been the same, the natural consequence in their opinions must have been, that chancrous fluid, where it was within contact of the urethra, would generate gonorrhœa, and what they thought, if the original cause were the same, was more evident still to be expected, as the certain result of their being produced from the same virus---that the continued lodgment of the venereal fluid from a gonorrhœa upon the glans, within side of the prepuce, and around the

the corona-glandis, must, if they were the same, to a certainty produce at least those symptoms which are found to be produced from one single connection that is held with a venereal subject, so locally diseased as to confer them. The fact is certain, that the one does not arise out of the other ; but the manner in which they attempted to account for it, was not also certain. Their observation, that the one symptom did not arise out of the other upon the same subject, was just ; but their denial, that the two symptoms were the same in the first cause, that they originated from the same fluid, always, was wrong ; that is, they reasoned to account for an evident and palpable truth upon false premises. Their candour would not permit them to withhold the fact, although they could not rightly account for it. They saw a truth in common occurrence, which they wanted to explain, but could not explain.

Others seeing that the fluid from gonorrhœa did not produce chancre, naturally concluded, that because it possessed not the power of producing any local effect, no constitutional infection could be imparted from a gonorrhœa. Even amongst those who admitted, for instance, that the infection from both was the same, some of that opinion could not be brought to believe, that the constitution could ever be infected through gonorrhœa, because they found that it did not produce chancre as the fluid passed out of the urethra and lodged on the parts without the urethra. Because, say they, if this fluid possesses a power of infection, prove to us, that it locally does so, before that we are requested to grant to you, that it can, or does constitutionally infect? And for this reason, a gonorrhœa has been pronounced by them to be harmless in its nature, to be alike to any other inflammatory attack, having no relation to virulence, for that it could not

not produce another venereal local symptom, and in the end, cured itself. But it is fortunate for the truth of my theory, that some of that opinion to which I last alluded, have proved to their conviction by experiments, that gonorrhœal and chancrous fluid are from the same origin ; and that as my theory is also founded upon the same basis, if it stood in need of any support from them, I am certain that their usual candour and alacrity to promote the truth, from whomsoever it comes, will not be reluctantly bestowed on this.

It was from the want of this discrimination, that the venereal secretion of a subject was inactive upon the same subject, that it was a harmless secretion to the subject which secreted it, that modern theorists have gone into erroneous venereal experiments---and where these experiments have been tried, the result from them has, from the same want of

of discrimination, involved the question into yet more doubt, and yet more difficulty, and which nothing but the true knowledge of this theory could ever have solved, and this plainly solves it.

Where these experiments have been tried, the result of them has not been according with intention, but depending upon accident; where gonorrhœal fluid has been taken from one subject and inserted into another, there a chancre has been the consequence; but where gonorrhœal fluid has been taken and inserted into another part of the same subject, there no chancre would, or could have been produced by it---no more than it can or does produce a chancre anywhere about the parts of the penis from the natural and continued flux of the gonorrhœal fluid from the urethra.

Those who tried these experiments with the idea

idea of ascertaining and confirming that gonorrhœa and chancre were produced from the same virus, were more at a loss than ever--- were wider from the mark in accounting for the reciprocal innocence of these fluids, as they were found in their natural action upon the same subject---for their experiments brought them to confess, that the same fluid does indiscriminately produce both symptoms, and that the distinction betwixt them consists only in the anatomical distinction of the parts on which the fluid is secreted. They of course knew this fact, but still the result of their experiments was at variance with the natural progress of both fluids, as it was found to act upon the same subject. I have ever condemned this mode of ascertaining facts. An experiment made upon a principle in error, can only be an echo of that principle in error. It appears in this instance, that experiments in their result ought to be with caution listened to---for as

they

they were originally founded in error, as they were injudiciously planned from the very beginning, and whether they succeeded in proving that the two fluids were the same or not, that success depending upon the accidental and precarious circumstance of the experiment being made from the fluid of the same subject, or that of another, they could not have ever been successful in fixing the fact, nor in proving why gonorrhœal fluid and chancrous fluid were harmless to the same subject who secreted them. For the experiments which prove that gonorrhœal and chancrous fluids are the same, are not calculated to account for the innocent action of both upon the subject who secretes them. There cannot be a doubt, but that they were induced to make these experiments solely because they saw that gonorrhœal fluid did not produce chancre on the same subject ; but in their attempt to explore the true cause, they offered a violence

to nature, and the common order of the case, by referring to another subject for the proof of that which was particular to the same subject, which other subject, in this instance, ought to have been totally out of the question.

If that they had followed the dictates of the natural action of the poison, if that they watched the effects, if that they had traced effects up to the cause, and if that they had scrupulously informed themselves of those which in common course of the natural operation of the poison were the most obvious and natural occurrences, this would have been the result of such an attentive and watchful observation.

They would have found from examining the woman who infected the man, after repeated proofs, from repeated facts, that the two fluids were the same in their

nature, and that the distinction betwixt them was only a difference in the action of the same poison on different anatomical parts. They would have also been convinced beyond a doubt, that gonorrhœal fluid on the same subject would not produce a chancre, and that no one chancre would produce another chancre on the same subject; but that if there be one or ten chancres upon the same subject, and upon a variety of anatomical parts, if some appeared early and others late, every one of them were contracted and produced from the fluid that was imparted by the infecting subject. And further, they would have been convinced that a gonorrhœa was never found to have been produced from the fluid of chancre on the same subject. They would have seen a chancre make its way upon the glans into the very aperture, and eating away the commissures of the urethra, and no gonorrhœa ever produced in consequence.

By

By thus watching the natural action of the poison, and its natural and relative progress, they would have seen the extent of the power of it in the strongest light. By departing from this natural action, and this natural and relative progress of the poison, and by going in consequence into outrageous experiment, they turned themselves out of the only path which could conduct them onward in the way to truth.

They have all along avoided meeting the whole of the question fairly, for those misgiving skepticks have been only seen to doubt one half of the question ; they have all of them confined their doubts to gonorrhœa, being the same in origin as chancre, that gonorrhœa would ever produce a chancre after any manner whatever, because that no chancre broke out in consequence of gonorrhœa upon the same subject. But they were never heard to say a syllable upon the other

half of the question, which is much the strongest in the confirmation of my theory, namely, that one chancre on the same subject will not produce another chancre, nor will it produce a gonorrhœa.

But now it remains for me to place the truth of my theory in a more conspicuous view, if it be necessary, or if it be possible, than I have yet hitherto done. I have shewn, and I trust the fact is satisfactorily established, that in order that the disease may be imparted from one subject to another, from a subject infected to a sound subject, it is only necessary that the fluid from the infected subject should come into contact with any part of a sound subject, and that thereby suffering it to remain undisturbed so that it can act, a possibility for infection will be given---and that by this means, it has the power of acting even upon sound skin. But I do not exact so much

as this in my postulatum. I only desire your acquiescence to the belief, that from a cut or sore upon the finger, practitioners in midwifery have been infected in consequence of their examining women who were pregnant, and who at the same time possessed one of the two symptoms, or both gonorrhœa and chancre. And I desire your acquiescence to the many fatal instances, to the fatal ravages which have been committed in consequence of the local venereal action from transplanted teeth, which teeth to all appearance were sound and beautiful in the sockets of the original possessor, and which teeth might have been shifted from one socket of the original possessor to another, without bringing forward any baneful effects from the bare removal of them. I trust that you are in want of no further arguments to prove, that the venereal poison may be propagated by inoculating a sound subject with the venereal fluid of a

subject

subject locally infected ; and that it is from the want of opportunity only, and not from the inability of the case, that subjects are not thus more commonly infected. But in the observations which I am now about to prefer before you, it will be apparent that the opportunity is always present, but that the ability never is.

If it were possible that our own venereal secretions could infect ourselves, I shall be glad to know how many young men or women could escape such action, when the gonorrhœal and chancrous fluids are discharged in such profusion for weeks or months, and when the patient is in the constant habit of fingering them ? Where a pimple may absorb them or a cut ? Where that which is received by the linen would infect, and where it would, to a moral certainty, if it were possible, how does it come to pass that we find no instance of it upon record ?

record? Where the same fingers which handle these parts are applied to the lips, the nose, and the eyes? Where, from the slovenliness of some, and the poverty of others, the same handkerchief is often employed to receive the discharge, and to wipe the nose, the eyes, and the face? Where are the instances in consequence of this unwary indulgence of the experiment, if that any consequences of other infection, on other parts of the same subject could be produced through it? I say for myself, that I never saw infection fairly transferred after this manner; and I never read or heard of a case where that it was clearly proved to be so. But if the infection could be transferred in this manner, who could escape infection on other parts through the infecting fluid discharged for a continuance of time?

These arguments are referable to the same unwary indulgence of the infection of not only

only gonorrhœal and chancrous fluids, but also of the fluid from a bubo.----I have rubbed these fluids on sores of the same subject over and over again, and never was able to trace the smallest effect from them. I have seen these fluids dwell upon pimples long enough for effect, without any effect. Within these few days a young gentleman, who was sore from riding, and who had a gonorrhœa, applied to me, I rubbed his gonorrhœal fluid on the galled parts, and he, from confidence in my opinion, did repeatedly the same, but not the least sensible effect was produced from it.

It is confessed, that the first sign of venereal infection may be one or more buboes in the groin; and from this circumstance it is clear, that the venereal poison received from another subject can be absorbed without leaving any local impression on the part

part where that it first obtained a lodgement.

The importance of this truth, upon reflection, is more than we are aware of. It proves that the first local symptoms, when that they do appear of any denomination, are not necessary for infecting the constitution ; it proves that the secretions excited by the local action of the foreign fluid (by which I mean that fluid which is imparted by the infecting subject) have no necessary share in infecting the constitution ; and it also proves, that it is the actual absorption of the foreign venereal fluid into the constitution which infects the constitution ; it proves that the subject infected is both locally and constitutionally acted upon by the foreign fluid, and that it is the actual pursuit of that foreign fluid, which, pervading the constitution, is productive of all the ve-

nereal symptoms that arise out of the action natural to that infection.

It is not only always the foreign fluid received from an infecting subject which infects the subject who receives it, but it is also the permanent action of the foreign fluid only, which is the support of the disease, and which keeps it alive and continues its power, unless that it be extinguished by the action of mercury. In short, the disease consists wholly in the presence of that venereal fluid, foreign and obnoxious to the constitution into which it has found admittance, and upon which it is acting. The fluid which is produced from the local action of that foreign fluid will be, when imparted to another subject, not the same in its natural action as it was to the subject who gave it, for the subject who gave it, gave a secretion of his own, but as that secretion

secretion was excited in consequence of the action of the foreign fluid of another subject, so will the action of the fluid be always the same when it is transferred. As the secretion of another, the fluid will be active, as a secretion of one's own, it will be passive.

*C* is infected by the impression which the venereal fluid has made on some part or other of *C*, either locally or constitutionally. This venereal fluid was imparted to *C* from *B*. This fluid to *B* was a fluid produced in consequence of the venereal action of a foreign fluid which *B* received from *A*. The fluid secreted by *B* is the effect of the stimulus of the foreign fluid which *B* received from *A*, and to *B* as a fluid secreted on a local part of *B*, through the action of the foreign stimulus received

from *A*, that fluid will be harmless, will be merely the result of the action of the foreign stimulus communicated from *A* to *B*.---But when *B* transfers this fluid to *C*, which was secreted by *B*, in consequence of the action of the foreign stimulus imparted by *A*, this fluid so transferred from *B* to *C*, will produce similar effects as a foreign stimulus acting on *C*, as that fluid which was transferred from *A* to *B*, produced on *B*; and so will the system of infection go on from *C* to *D*.---The fluid which *B* secreted, must therefore be considered as a secretion proper to *B*, and therefore harmless to *B*; but as it was produced from a poison imparted by *A* to *B*; so can *B* transfer that power the same in its nature to *C*, which *B* received from *A*.

It is therefore self-evident that as our own secretions do not interfere, so as that gonorrhœal fluid shall locally produce chancre, or *vice versa*, no more will the progress of the foreign fluid when absorbed be either influenced in its action, be either advanced, or retarded, be in any ways affected from the fluid, barely as a fluid, which arises in consequence of chancre, gonorrhœa, or bubo, on the same subject. But all future venereal constitutional consequences depend totally and wholly upon the actual absorption of that venereal fluid which was imparted from another subject. Every venereal inflammation, every ulcer, every pain, both local and constitutional are the passive effects of the active power of the foreign venereal fluid. And so far as they refer to the subject who possesses them, the symptoms of gonorrhœa, chancre, and bubo, &c. are only so many arguments of the presence

presence of the foreign fluid, and of its action upon these parts. But if the fluid of either be imparted to another subject, it will act on that subject similar to the action of that fluid which was received from a prior subject upon the subject who imparted it.

I trust that I have explained that which I meant to explain ; and that which strikes me as an unalterable permanent truth.---- A truth which opens to our comprehension many of the most important phænomena of the venereal action, a truth which enables us to see with more clearness, the way which nature pursues, a truth by which the action of the poison is guided, and controuled, as it were with a bridle, a truth which gives a different turn to almost the whole of our theoretick reasoning upon the subject, and a truth which from analogous references will be found according with the

the general and relative law of action in other poisons. And I dare venture to affirm, that the distinction which this truth affords, will hereafter open a wide field for the more clear investigation of many phænomena which offer throughout the whole of the doctrine of pathology.

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FINIS,

WRITTEN BY MR. FOOT,

And sold by T. BECKET.

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